

Wm Vaughan  
**CONSIDERATIONS**

ON THE OPINION STATED BY THE

**LORDS OF THE COMMITTEE**

OF

**C O U N C I L,**

IN A REPRESENTATION TO THE

**K I N G,**

UPON THE

**C O R N L A W S,**

*That GREAT BRITAIN is unable to produce CORN sufficient for its own Consumption.*

AND ON THE

**C O R N - B I L L**

NOW DEPENDING IN PARLIAMENT.

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By WILLIAM MITFORD, Esq.

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# CONSIDERATIONS,

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IN the month of March last year, (1790) the Lords of the Committee of Council, appointed for the consideration of all matters relating to trade and foreign plantations, submitted to the King a representation on the state of the laws for regulating the exportation and importation of Corn, and on the amendments and improvements which they supposed wanting in those laws; which representation was printed and delivered for

the information of the members of both Houses of Parliament.\*

In this representation it is stated, that upon an average of nineteen years, from 1746 to 1765, the corn exported from this country is supposed to have produced a neat profit of not less than 651,000*£.* yearly;— but that in the eighteen years, from 1770 to 1788, this country has sustained a loss in the corn-trade of 291,000*£.* yearly, which sum it has annually paid to foreign nations for the supply of its inhabitants.†

This intelligence, on first view of so unpleasant an aspect, is followed by the comforting ‘hope’ expressed by the same high authority, ‘that a change so extraordinary,

\* It has been since printed for public sale by Stockdale in Piccadilly.

† Lord Sheffield (in his Observations on the Corn-Bill, p. 5.) says, ‘the sum paid to foreigners for corn during that period, is *undoubtedly* much greater;’ but he quotes no authority and states no reason for the supposition.

‘ in a concern of so much importance, is only  
‘ to be imputed to an increased population ;  
‘ to the numbers of horses and other cattle  
‘ which we now breed and maintain more  
‘ than formerly ; and to that opulence which  
‘ has generally diffused itself through all  
‘ ranks of men, from the extension of our  
‘ trade and manufactures, and which has oc-  
‘ casioned an increased consumption of all  
‘ the necessaries of life ; for there can be no  
‘ reason to suppose, either that the agricul-  
‘ ture of the country has of late declined, or  
‘ that, for so long a continuance of years,  
‘ the seasons have been uniformly unfavor-  
‘ able.’

The satisfaction, however, which might arise from this reflection is, in the next paragraph, checked by the following very alarming information ; ‘ the Committee are  
‘ further impressed with the importance of  
‘ this subject, and are the more induced to  
‘ think that it requires immediate attention,

‘ as,

as, from accounts they have received of  
 the produce and consumption of corn in  
 most European countries, they are inclined  
 to believe that, in ordinary years, the pro-  
 duce of corn in Europe is not more than  
 equal to the consumption of its inhabitants;  
 and that whenever the crops fail in any de-  
 gree, the deficiency can only be supplied from  
 the harvest of America.

Great Britain is not here specified, but cer-  
 tainly implied: she must, indeed, among  
 the nations of Europe, have been most  
 particularly in the contemplation of the  
 Committee; and their statement of the im-  
 ports and exports of corn, with the observa-  
 tion upon it, leaves no room to doubt but  
 they meant to have it understood as their  
 opinion, "that Great Britain is, and without  
 a decrease of population, must ever remain,  
 unable to supply itself with bread."

Britain, then, being in the opinion of the Lords of the Committee, thus critically situated, to frame a bill whose operation might improve the condition of the country, and effectually obviate so dreadful a calamity as a deficiency of bread, has employed their labors. From the known abilities and characters of those engaged in this business, much was reasonably to be expected. The noble Lord in particular, who presides in the Committee, is, in experience of official business, inferior to none; in tried ability for the conduct of it, superior to most. Yet the public hope has been hitherto, not a little disappointed in the result. A bill has been offered to Parliament; but so far from finding general approbation, it has already experienced, in the House of Commons, powerful opposition; so far from carrying with it conviction that it will answer the salutary purpose which its framers have had in view, it is thought by many more likely to enhance the tremendous evil which it is intended to

pre-

prevent ; and, in particular, the clause containing the principal innovation proposed for the improvement of the corn-law, has been rejected, in opposition to the most popular Minister that this country perhaps ever knew.

In this state of things, no man can be indifferent to the event ; no citizen can be without a right to declare his opinion. Indeed it is a subject, on some points at least of which, those most remote from high office are perhaps more likely to have the experience and information necessary for forming a just judgement, than those who have passed their lives in the situation of ministers of State, or in preparing for that situation. As a country-gentleman, therefore, I shall not fear to communicate to the public those opinions which a country-gentleman may fairly presume to form. Already Lord Sheffield, a Member of the House of Commons, after having, in the House, delivered his sentiments on the subject without the effect he desired, has given them

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to the public in print. I shall wish to refer to, rather than interfere with, his pamphlet, which abounds in just and weighty observations. In travelling toward the same point with his Lordship, by a road something different, I shall take notice of different objects, and I shall take larger notice of some on which he has but slightly touched.

'The production of corn is the first and  
'most important occupation of the subjects of  
'every country, and on its success rests the  
'main support and prosperity of every other  
'trade. For the sake of the consumer,  
'therefore, the most liberal encouragement  
'and protection should be given to those em-  
'ployed in it: for without offering proper  
'incitements to their industry, plenty can  
'never be procured.'

These are the very just and very important reflections of the Lords of the Committee of Council, at the conclusion of their representation to the King. It is most highly satisfactory to me to have such principles, stated on such authority, for the ground-work, and I desire no other, of all that I have to say on the subject before me. How it has been that in the bill offered to Parliament for the improvement of the corn-laws, these principles have been apparently overlooked, may not, possibly, be for me to inquire. Lord Sheffield thinks 'that a fruitless disposition' (in the Lords of the Committee) 'to obviate every interested murmur, has rendered them' (the principles) 'ineffectual or pernicious.'\* Let me, however, be permitted to observe that, while the interests of trade have, for the last century or two, formed a principal object of study for statesmen, in almost every govern-

\* *Observations on the Corn-bill*, p. 73, 2d. Edition.  
ment

ment of Europe, those of agriculture, tho often spoken of as of the first importance, are far from having been actually treated with equal attention. To account for this, perhaps it may suffice to consider the different manner in which Land and Commerce offer themselves as objects on which to raise a public revenue. Land can be taxed, and heavily taxed, in the gross ; Commerce only in detail : Land affords little variety of articles for taxation, and those always the same ; Commerce offers innumerable, and is frequently producing new : Land, sturdy in its nature, is patient under injury, and able to bear rough treatment ; Commerce is delicate and irritable in extreme ; winces before it is touched ; screams at but the imagination of danger, and kicks at or flies from the slightest injury. Statesmen have, therefore, been compelled to study the interests of Commerce, if they would profit from the means of revenue which Commerce affords : they have not been equally urged to an acquaintance

tance with the interests of Agriculture, because, in utter ignorance of them, they can raise a large revenue from Land.

But, however it has happened, on comparing the bill offered to Parliament with the representation submitted to the King, it appears, I must own, to me, as it seems to have appeared to Lord Sheffield, that the Lords of the Committee have, upon their own principles, begun their busines at the wrong end: they have been considering of means to improve the corn-trade, when they should have been inquiring for means to improve the corn-culture: they have too hastily (I have great respect for them, and would not wantonly use expressions that might seem to imply the contrary) but I must hope that they have much too hastily adopted the notion, and declared it to the world, that Britain is unable to supply itself with bread; that Britain must be dependent upon other countries for subsistence; that

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she must be dependent upon America ! The imagination of such importance in the discovery of Columbus never occurred to the heated fancies of our ancestors, when they were most eager in adventure to the new world in quest of gold ; and surely it behoves us to consider well and inquire diligently before we rest under the persuasion that it is now necessary for us to go thither for bread ; and still more before we take measures which may produce the necessity, if it does not yet exist, or may enhance it if it does.

The Lords of the Committee of Council have themselves observed, that a mistaken speculation in the trade of corn may be productive of the most serious ill consequences, dearth, general distress, popular commotion.\*

If

\* Representation, p. 4 or 7. I did not know, when these Considerations were committed to writing,

If, then, we proceed to compare their corn-bill with the principles which they have themselves laid down, the first remark that occurs (thus, at least, those disposed to cavil at the measures of administration will probably turn it) is, that they propose to promote the home production of corn by establishing perpetual magazines of the produce of other countries. This is the liberal encouragement to the corn-grower, this the protection, this the incitement to industry, without which, as the Lords of the Committee of Council have declared, *plenty can never be procured!*\* On the other hand, those desirous to find whatever may deserve applause and obviate reproach, while they give credit to the framers of the bill for good intention

ting, that the Representation had been printed for public sale by Stockdale in Piccadilly. In citing the pages, the first number refers to the copy printed for the use of the House of Commons, the second to that printed by Stockdale,

\* Representation, p. 20 or 25.

in the measures taken to promote the trade in corn, and to keep down the price of so indispensable an article for the consumer, must be sorely disappointed to find no provision, or next to none, for encouraging the growth at home, and restoring that advantageous circumstance which a few years only ago certainly existed, the superiority of the home produce to the consumption ; and they will unavoidably feel some anxiety for the uncertain event of the principal innovation proposed, some alarm at the appearance, at least, of danger which it bears, that in this, as in so many former instances, the landed will become a sacrifice to the trading interest, and that the permanent welfare of the country will be bartered for a present but precarious plenty.

There is a writer, most deservedly of very high authority, who has stated principles on the subject of the corn-trade, different from those professed by the Lords of the Committee of

Coun-

Council in their representation to the King, and exactly coinciding with what appears to have guided them in framing the corn-bill. In Adam Smith's Inquiry concerning the Wealth of Nations we find the following passage: 'The trade of the merchant importer of foreign corn for home consumption, evidently contributes to the immediate supply of the home market, and must so far be immediately beneficial to the great body of the people. It tends, indeed, to lower somewhat the average money-price of corn, but not to diminish its real value, or the quantity of labor which it is capable of maintaining. If importation was at all times free, our farmers and country-gentlemen would, probably, one year with another, get less money for their corn than they do at present, when importation is at most times in effect prohibited; but the money which they got would be of more value, would buy more goods of all other kinds, and would employ more labor.'

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' Their real wealth, their real revenue, therefore, would be the same as at present, tho' it might be expressed by a smaller quantity of silver; and they would be neither disabled nor discouraged from cultivating corn as much as they do at present. On the contrary, as the rise in the real value of silver, in consequence of lowering the money-price of corn, lowers somewhat the money-price of all other commodities, it gives the industry of the country, where it takes place, some advantage in all foreign markets, and thereby tends to encourage and increase that industry. But the extent of the home-market for corn must be in proportion to the general industry of the country where it grows, or to the number of those who produce something else, or, what comes to the same thing, the price of something else, to give in exchange for corn. But in every country the home-market, as it is the nearest and most convenient, so it is

'likewise the greatest and most important market for corn. That rise in the real value of silver therefore, which is the effect of lowering the average money-price of corn, tends to enlarge the greatest and most important market for corn, and thereby to encourage, instead of discouraging its growth.\*

I have so much respect for Adam Smith, I so revere his principles of Political Economy in general, and so admire his singularly able exposition of them, that I would not, for a light cause, either expose myself to the charge of presumption by controverting what he has advanced, or risk weakening the just authority of his work by showing that he was ignorant in any matter on which he has undertaken to decide. But the subject is too important to allow that mistake

\* *Wealth of Nations*, b. 4. ch. 5. p. 121, 122, v. 2. edit. 1776.

should pass uncontradicted ; and there being passages in his book which prove that his knowledge of agriculture was scanty, it is better that it should be so generally understood. Of whatever in agriculture is obvious to speculative observation, he has judged with his usual sagacity : in logical deduction, his perspicacity and exactness never fail him : but in his deficiency of practical knowledge, he has once or twice assumed false premises ; and his mistakes shew him ignorant of the detail, to a degree less to be expected in an inquisitive and sagacious observer in his line of life than in that of a minister of state.

The philosopher however, and, may I presume to add, the statesmen, Adam Smith, and the Lords of the Committee of Council, seem equally to have omitted duly to consider that the soil and climate of England, for the most part, and particularly for the most valuable parts, offer the choice of two prin-

pal modes for deriving revenue from land; widely different in themselves, of very different advantage to the nation at large, but often so nearly equal in profit to the individual possessor, that a very small matter may decide his preference of either to the other; of Feeding to Tillage, or of Tillage to Feeding. This being so, it must be obvious, that the ready effect of the importation of foreign corn for home consumption, unless in times of scarcity and dearth, must be, not to incourage the home growth of corn, but to dispose both land-owner and land-holder to convert arable to grass; for which, without any new instigation, the existing inducements are perhaps too numerous and too powerful.\*

But as, for want of conversancy in the business, mistaken notions are thus, we see, held

\* Adam Smith himself has adverted to this effect, in circumstances nearly analogous, in antient Italy. *Wealth of Nations*, b. 1. c. 11. p. 87. vol. 1. edit. 1776.

and

and even deduced by logical argument, in regard to other points, so possibly it may happen with regard to this; it may be imagined that the increase of pasture at the expence of arable land is no national evil: more cattle it may be supposed, will be fed; population will of course attend upon general plenty; and the hands which lose employment in husbandry may be advantageously turned to manufactures: Holland may be cited for example; producing no corn, and nevertheless the most populous and flourishing province in Europe. An answer to this however can be necessary for few and need not be long. The Dutch, compelled to exertion by untoward circumstances, and guided by a policy wisely adapted to their circumstances, have flourished wonderfully; but their fortune, which began in perils, must always remain hazardous: they cannot realize it; if they would continue to have a great income they must continue (may I be allowed the comparison) to hold the faro-bank. Perhaps we have

have too much disposition among us, in public not less than in private concerns, to give our attention with a fonder predilection to the faro-bank than to our estates; Commerce can bring us corn; why should we plow?

But for whatever share of our wealth foreign commerce may be necessary, wisdom will surely require that it should be as little as possible necessary to our subsistence; that we should make the best use of the precious advantages which the bounty of nature hath so liberally spred before us, and not reduce ourselves, from the certain plenty which our own soil can give, to depend for bread upon the precarious supplies of a foreign and distant commerce. Nor is it true that an increase of cattle will follow upon the conversion of plow-land to pasture. On the contrary, it is well known that through the modern improvements in husbandry, which are still in progres, land in tillage, producing corn in course,

course, may, in general, be made to maintain more cattle than the same land in permanent grass. Indeed, to those who have any acquaintance with the business, it is so self-evident that the population, plenty, and security of the country, are manifold more promoted by a spirited and judicious tillage than by the best managed pasturage, that arguments to prove it cannot be farther necessary.

In proceeding then to the consideration of the means by which the home-growth of corn may be increased, an object immediately forces itself to notice, of which nevertheless it seems difficult to know how to speak. Of all obstacles to an improved and increasing tillage, which ever did or almost can exist, where liberty and property are protected by law, Tithe is surely the greatest. Nevertheless, tho' the gross and glaring inconveniences arising, both to the public and to individuals, from that most oppressive and impolitic of all taxes,

are

are as generally acknowledged as extensively felt, yet every proposal to procure a commutation of it, tho brought forward by men in exalted situations, has been so totally unsuccessful, that no common occasion could perhaps warrant the presumption of a private individual even to mention it again. But when so solemn a declaration, from such authority as that of the Lords of Council, warrants the apprehension that, if America should be adverse, or seas should be stormy, or an enemy's cruizers should be successful, Britain may want bread, any one may surely be allowed to say what in his opinion might obviate so formidable a calamity; and if means exist for enabling her own soil to produce the desired plenty, it may be not unreasonable to hope that the measure, formerly rejected because it was difficult, may be now undertaken if it should be found not impossible; formerly reprobated as a hazardous innovation upon the old law, may be now admitted, if it can

can be made not inconsistent with eternal reason.

It is very far from my intention to propose the spoliation of the clergy of France for an example here. Nor shall I make any inquiry into the right which has been so long allowed to our clergy, to appropriate, to their own sole use and benefit, a revenue originally given for the additional purposes of repairing their churches and relieving the poor. The clergy should have a liberal maintenance, in some degree proportioned to the wealth of the country; and tho instances may exist in which finecures and pluralities may, not totally without reason, be considered as abuses, yet in too many others the clerical stipend is notoriously too scanty.\* Neither will I stop to inlarge,

\* Adam Smith says, 'In England, and in all Roman Catholic countries, the *lottery* of the church is in reality much more advantageous than is necessary.'

\* The example of the churches of Scotland, of Geneva,

inlarge, tho the subject is not a little important, upon the injury to religion and morality, or the inconveniencies to the clergy themselves, inseparable from a mode of revenue so singularly calculated to excite discord where there dought to be the purest harmony; a mode by which it is impossible that the most valuable and respectable of the order, the meek, the conscientious, the generous, should obtain their just dues, and equally im-

‘ and of several other protestant churches, may satisfy us that, in so creditable a profession, in which education is so easily procured, the hopes of much more moderate benefices will draw a sufficient number of learned, decent, and respectable men into holy orders.’ Wealth of Nations, b. 1. c. 10. p. 164. edit. 1776. This however is meer matter of opinion, on which others may differ from him. In another place we find an observation of more sterling weight. ‘ The more of this fund (the revenue arising from land) is given to the church, the less, it is evident, can be spared to the state. It may be laid down as a certain maxim that, all other things being supposed equal, the richer the church, the poorer must necessarily be, either the sovereign on the one hand, or the people on the other; and in all cases, the less able must the state be to defend itself.’ Wealth of Nations, b. 5. c. 1. p. 407.

possible

possible that those of an opposite character, the haughty, the morose, the avaricious, (many such it will be hoped there are not, but some it must be feared there always will be) should not make themselves the plagues of their parishes; and render even their venerable profession an object of popular detestation. My present purpose will be merely to point out to the many, whose situation has not led them to acquaintance with the subject, the necessary tendency of Tithe, to check improvements of agriculture in general, and most particularly to check the cultivation of corn. The operation of tithe indeed is so various, according to circumstances, so changeable, according to the tempers of men on whom the collection depends, that it would be scarcely possible, through the most laborious investigation, to calculate with any approach to exactness the amount of the injury sustained by the public through that oppressive tax. But a very little consideration may convince any disposed to the inquiry, that the

amount of the mischief, by which nobody profits, is very great.

A mischief by which nobody profits is a description which I do not at all fear to apply to Tithe, tho I well know the supposition has been common, that it is impossible to find for the clergy an adequate compensation; adequate at the same time in value and in security, and of a nature to follow, like tithe, all the varieties that in the lapse of ages may happen in the value of money. I am fully persuaded that Corn-rents may be made equal to the object in every particular; an idea far from new, and to which I never heard an objection of any weight; indeed I scarcely ever heard an objection. Nor does the advantage of that mode of providing a revenue for the clergy rest upon speculation only; it has been proved in the practice of centuries, during which the colleges of our universities, which possess estates paying corn-rents, have found them perfectly secure, leading to no litigation,

tion, and subject to inconvenience of no kind. Neither, from such conversation as I have had opportunity to have with the clergy on the subject, have I any reason to suppose they would, in general, be averse to a fair commutation: on the contrary I have known many of them declare they very much wished it. The difficulty would be, not to accommodate corn-rents to the purpose, but to ascertain the value of every living in the kingdom; a difficulty however, which would be no greater, upon an average for each parish, than what has been so frequently experienced where common-fields have been inclosed. But perhaps the greater difficulty would be to induce those to undertake the business who alone have means to carry it through. Present advantage commonly excites the energy of statesmen; and this would not follow the commutation of tithe. Individuals indeed would be immediately relieved: against dearth and famine new security would quickly accrue to the country: population would grow with

with the increasing demand for labor; but any advantage to the public revenue would be distant. Nevertheless in the present moment circumstances are not wanting to afford better hope, than at any former time, that the beneficial task may be undertaken by those capable of accomplishing it: when ministers themselves hold out to national consideration the alarming intelligence that the country is in danger of wanting bread; when at the head of them is one who has already shown, that his diligence and courage, (of his abilities it is needless to speak) are equal to any labor that the public good may require, and who is yet at so early a period of life that he may hope to reap the late harvest, where others must be contented to enjoy in prophetic vision only the reward of the seedtime toil.

To proceed then to the little that appears necessary to say of the effect of tithe upon agriculture, that it has a direct tendency to discourage improvement of every kind is too obvious

obvious to require more than to be mentioned. But, it is much to our present purpose to observe that, beside a general tendency to check all improvement, tithe has a particular tendency to check improvements in tillage, and to occasion a preference of Feeding to Arable-land. Here its effects do not come within the ready observation of those who have not opportunity to observe much, and disposition to observe closely. Tithe does not deter a farmer from plowing; he is in the habit of industry himself, and his horses must not lie idle. When he has plowed he will of course sow. The rub comes when he has already plowed too much; which he will commonly do if his landlord does not prevent him; or, when, in ordinary course, his land wants manure which his farm-yard cannot furnish; or where draining or other improvement requires more than his ordinary hands. Whenever his land wants his money to make it productive, then he thinks of the Tithe. Full eleven per

percent of the increase which his strong box pays for, must go to the parson. The farmer must stand all the chance of rains in autumn, of frosts in winter, of blights in spring, of a wet summer for his strong land, of a dry summer for his parching land: the tenth sheaf would reward his adventure or alleviate his loss: but certain profit from the spoil of his strong box is to go only to one who contributes neither money nor labor, nor has any claim of merit whatever to the increase of produce. He hesitates; and unless he is more than commonly liberal, or more than commonly thoughtless, no improvement is made.

tithe operates much less injuriously upon Feeding-land. Little industry is there employed: capital is bestowed not upon the land but upon stock; and except in the article of hay, the tithe that can be taken is comparatively small. In many parts there is a modus for milk where there is none for corn: and where  
the

the right to take all small tithes in kind exists, it is not easily exercised. Here again occurs the consideration of the clergyman's interest and the clergyman's reputation. The conscientious, the benevolent, the peace-making pastor, what is he to do? If he has a small living and a large family, between his duty to his children and his duty to his parish, what perpetual anxiety must he suffer! The haughty and griping cannot get his full dues; and even the most wriggling attorney, to whom, as is too common, the right of worrying the parish may be sold, tho ingenuity in the legal modes of vexation may make their damage greater, it will seldom make his profit equal the real value of the tithe. This however, tho hardly to be passed by, is not the consideration to which it is my purpose principally to direct attention. What I would point out is, that Tithe has, in every case, a tendency to decide the landowner to a preference of the Feeding to the Tillage-husbandry.

If, from cultivated land, we proceed to the consideration of wild ground capable of cultivation, we shall find the discouragement from Tithe, wherever it cannot be avoided by an allotment to the clergyman, is enormous. So long ago as the reign of Edward the Sixth a statute was made with the obvious intention to give some relief, against the oppression of that impolitic tax, to those who would employ their industry and their capital in converting unprofitable to productive land ; but the decisions of the courts, ever jealous of the interests of the clergy, have made the effect of this well-meant, but perhaps ill-worded, statute null. The grievance remains in its original extent ; and, the moment a piece of waste has been improved, ten per cent of the produce accrues as a benefit to the clergyman. In many cases that ten per cent would reward the industry and risk of the improver, where, without it, he can hardly make, or cannot make, common interest by such employment of his capital. Of course the improvement

is not made, or is very far from being carried to the possible extent, to the extent that, for the public good must be desired.

Farmers will never stop the plow, as long as they can get a crop by it without a direct expence in money upon their land. But this disposition in the farmer to over-plow, co-operates with the effect of tithe to dispose landlords to a preference of pasture to arable farms. Pasture is little liable to mischief, and easily watched: arable is open to ready and great injury, and with difficulty guarded against it. Nevertheless, if the dues to the clergy were regulated by any other criterion than the amount of industry and capital employed by the cultivator, farmers would be induced to spend their money in improvements of which the profits would be their own. In all the arable countries, the public, not less than the private benefit, would be immediate; wherever rough ground is private property, it would invite the plow;

and, even in the grazing countries, the land-owners would find inducement to abate the rigor of their present system, forbidding on any account to break up any pasture; for many thousand acres of the richest soil in England, now in grass, might be made so much more profitable in tillage, that the consideration of increased risk to the land, and increased trouble in the care of it, would yield to the allurement of greater income.

Here I must take notice of another mistake of Adam Smith, an unaccountable mistake for a man of his extensive observation and disposition to diligent inquiry, and which might be of very mischievous tendency, if it were possible that legislators could be uninformed enough to adopt it.

He reprobates the restraints put upon farmers by landowners, with regard to the mode

mode of cultivation and the succession of crops; which he says, are ' generally the effects of the landlord's conceit of his own superior knowledge, a conceit in most cases very ill founded; ' and he even proposes a tax upon conditions in leases imposing those restraints, as a tax of regulation, a kind of penalty.\* It appears extraordinary that Adam Smith's acuteness should not have discovered on this occasion, what he has so ably shown where the investigation was more intricate, that, with regard to land in tillage, the interests of the landowner and of the public are generally one: the interests of the farmer, and of the public often opposite. It is the interest of the landowner, equally as of the public, that the land should bear the greatest crops of the most valuable kinds in the quickest succession which it can always maintain: it is the interest of the renter, that the land

\* Wealth of Nations, b. 5. c. 2. p. 431. v. 2. edit.  
1776.

should

should bear the greatest crops of the most valuable kinds in a quicker succession than it can maintain. It is therefore no less important for the public than the individual land-owner, that tenants should be confined to a course of crops under which the soil will not cease to be productive.

But if Adam Smith's work is not entirely free from imperfections, inherent, in greater or less degree, in everything human, I shall nevertheless resort to it with satisfaction for authority, as the most authoritative book the world possesses upon the very important subject of which it treats. It is then his very just observation, that Capital is no way employed so beneficially for the public as in Agriculture: Manufactures hold but the second place; Trade the third. 'The capital employed in agriculture,' he says, 'not only puts into motion a greater quantity of productive labor than any equal capital employed in manufactures, but, in proportion

too

‘ too to the quantity of productive labor which it employs, it adds a much greater value to the annual produce of the land and labor of the country, to the real wealth and revenue of the inhabitants. Of all the ways in which a capital can be employed, it is by far the most advantageous to society.’\* He afterward explains very ably the causes of the decay of Agriculture in Europe, after the fall of the Roman empire, of the discouragement under which it lay after arts began to revive, and of the superiority which Trade and Manufactures have obtained and still preserve among all the European nations. The prosperity of commerce and the wealth it introduced, he very justly observes, first roused agriculture from its long lethargy. Nevertheless it may be affirmed that the present flourishing state of our trade and manufactures operates in one respect to the disadvantage of agriculture. With all the wealth of the

\* *Wealth of Nations*, b. 2. c. 5. p. 442. v. 1.

country, it is notorious that there is a general deficiency of *capital* among those who ingage in farming, especially among tillage-farmers. Trade and manufactures offer superior allurement, by the prospect of a less laborious and more social life, and of opportunities of greater fortune. The spirit of dissipation, the spirit of adventure, the spirit of gambling, for all which the present age is renowned, all point to trade or manufacture in preference to agriculture; and, among the modes of agriculture, to grazing in preference to tillage. Hence arises additional necessity for removing the obstacles which principally discourage the application of capital, in the most beneficial of all ways for the public, to tillage.

I will venture to own that I always doubted the wisdom of repealing the *Shop-tax*: I will venture to add that I always doubted the justice of it. Without any wide-wandering from my subject after a topic whose season is passed, I will endeavour in few words

words to explain an opinion at which Sir Benjamin Hammer will start as at a paradox. When a bill is offered to Parliament for imposing a tax, by those whose official duty it is to devise and propose means for supplying the public wants, if the evident inconveniences of such proposed tax are great, I apprehend it may comport with the wisdom of Parliament to reject the bill, upon the simple consideration of its inconveniences. But when a tax-bill has been once enacted into a law, and that law has without any difficulty been carried into execution, I am at a loss to discover any good principle upon which such a tax can be repealed, upon the simple consideration of its inconvenience. I thought (till the proceedings of the legislature informed me otherwise) that a previous step, necessary both to the dignity and to the justice of Parliament, would have been (I should suppose by a committee appointed for the purpose) to have carefully compared the tax complained of with other existing taxes :

and unless it was found in principle more objectionable, or in operation either more injurious to the public or more oppressive upon individuals than any other existing tax, in common reason and in common justice it could have no pretence to be the first repealed, even were the country in a situation to admit the relief of repealing instead of being under the necessity of still imposing taxes. Now the objection to the principle of the shop-tax applies equally to that of the attorneys-tax; no great public interest was interfered with, as by the salt-tax; and, for the pretended oppression upon individuals, it was difficult to repress indignation at the misused eloquence of the advocates for the *poor* shopkeepers, none of whom paid the tax, unless they were rich or imprudent enough to live in high-rented houses, when the real oppression from taxes, some of them very partial, upon that infinitely more valuable as well as more numerous

rous part of the community, the laboring, the truly poor, is so notorious.

Shopkeepers are, undoubtedly, not only a valuable, but a necessary set of subjects. But it is the body that is necessary; it is not necessary that any particular man should be a shopkeeper; and tho, as a man, every individual shopkeeper is intitled to the protection and care of Parliament, in common share with all other British subjects, yet as a shopkeeper, I apprehend he is intitled to them only inasfar as his occupation of shopkeeper is beneficial to the public. Upon this principle I always doubted whether even the relief given to the poorer shopkeepers by the modification of the tax, two years before its repeal, was wisely administered; because I doubted whether the miserable shopkeeping which that modification went to incourage, was beneficial to the public, or even to the individuals ingaged in it. Shopkeeping has the double allurement of being little labo-

rious, and affording scope to the spirit of adventure; but it seems very possible that most of those numerous wretched shop-keepers of the wealthy and luxurious city of Westminister, who could not pay their parish-rates, might, with a little more industry, have applied their personal labor, and perhaps also their small capitals, small each by itself, but of some consideration perhaps in the aggregate, more advantageously, both for the country and for their own families, in some other way; and whether the shop-tax, as a tax of regulation, might not have been beneficial to the country.

I am not however going to propose a revival of the tax: there seem, on the contrary, to have been reasons enough why it should never have been imposed; and, tho I doubt if either the wisdom or the justice of the repeal can be supported on broad and general principles, yet I think it very possible that

poli-

political prudence, and a reasonable deference to the temper of the time, may have required it. But, whether approving or disapproving these opinions, I hope it will not be thought by any that I have totally quitted my subject to state them; for I conceive that, when, under the urgency of the very alarming information communicated by the Lords of the Committee of Council, the means of promoting tillage become such interesting objects of public discussion, no principle upon which the application of capital to husbandry has been diverted, or may be encouraged, can be foreign to the speculation.

There can be no doubt but the exportation of horses, and the exportation of cheese, and perhaps of butter, so much increased of late, have a tendency disadvantageous to the extension of tillage. The gentlemen of the western counties would probably be dissatisfied with a tax upon the exportation of cheese, the immoderate

derate increase in the price of which necessary article to the laboring poor, within the last forty years, has been so beneficial to their revenues. Perhaps however, were tithe perpetually commuted, they might make themselves ample amends by an improved tillage, and even without diminishing their dairies. The tillage farmer does not readily migrate ; his confined education, among other circumstances, and his narrow communication, much more limited in the course of his business than that of the grazier, put him under disadvantages in a strange country : otherwise, an east-country farmer could not fail to make a fortune on an arable farm in Gloucestershire, Somersetshire, or Wiltshire ; and in the western counties, particularly the rich and extensive shire of Devon, the mere change, by which the capitals of the yeomanry, so miserably wasted in the purchase of small life-estates, might be employed, with so much greater advantage to themselves and to the public, in the spirited cultivation of more

exten-

extensive farms, would make an important addition to the quantity of corn annually raised in the kingdom.

Notwithstanding however my respect for the gentlemen of the cheese-countries, and I will add, my fear of them, I will venture to ask a question which I must depend upon their liberality, perhaps in some little opposition to their interest, to excuse. But Adam Smith says, and says truly, that liberality has always been a characteristic of the landed interest of this country. Bread then is the first and most indispensable staff of life for the laboring poor. Not meat, but cheese is the second: even bacon is but a third: beef and mutton, except hung-beef in parts of the north of England, supplying the place of pork and bacon in the south, come little in their way. Why is it, when such anxious care is taken, at the risk of checking the home-growth, and grossly injuring the landed interest, to keep down the price of corn, that no legislative attention

tion has been paid to the immoderate increase in the price of cheese? Or, when the price of every other article most indispensable for the laboring poor is so greatly risen, and the value of money so greatly fallen, when the money-price of cheese, in particular, is more than doubled within the last half century, how can it possibly be so necessary as the legislature seem to have been persuaded, that corn alone should be forcibly kept to a lower money-price than the sufficient subsistence of the laboring poor was found to require a century and half ago? In my inability to reconcile the apparent inconsistency, if I may speak, I must declare that, to my apprehension, there is a want of connected and comprehensive system; and, if for want of knowing how better to explain my meaning, I may be allowed a very homely, but it appears to me a very just comparison, the attempt to remedy our deficient growth of corn, as the bill now depending in Parliament proposes, by a corn-trade that shall supply

ply all Europe,\* seems like mending an old coat with a large and splendid patch, which will only make it the sooner fall off the wearer's back.

Perhaps, if the necessities of the revenue, or the convenience of those who are charged with the care of it, did not persuade to allow, and even to promote, a pernicious use or rather abuse of corn, *distillery* might be discouraged with more than one public benefit; and, if spirits must be had, the freer importation of rum and brandy might be allowed, to save the home consumption of corn, rather than, by overloading the market with foreign corn, to check the home growth of that most indispensable of all necessities.

\* See the Representation of the Committee of Council, p. 18 or 22, and the Corn-Bill with the Amendments, p. 23.

There is nevertheless a tax which checks the consumption of grain, in a manner very injurious to the country. Among all the taxes paid to Government, that which, in different ways, is paid for *beer*, is perhaps, in its present amount, the most pernicious. It operates as a most powerful encouragement to smuggling; forming almost the main spring of it, since the contraband trade in tea has been checked by the late wise alteration. Smuggling will always have place more or less on the coasts; but, if the families of the laboring poor had not been in effect prohibited the use of beer, the contraband trade that spreads and has its regular connections through every part of the kingdom, would never have acquired that splendor; and smuggled spirits would not have been as familiarly known on the hills of Derbyshire as on the coast of Cornwall. With the encouragement to smuggling, the tax on beer operates as an instigation to dram-drinking; injures the health, injures the morals of the largest class

of the people ; and reduces the sober and sturdy race of villagers to the dissolute manners and debilitated bodies of the worst rabble of great towns. Morality and modern legislation indeed have sometimes been thought to have no kind of connection ; but still the injury to agriculture and even to manufactures, that cannot but issue from superseding beer-drinking by dram-drinking among the lower orders of men, may deserve the consideration of those to whom the revenue and commerce of the country are objects of care. But whatever may have been the character of former times, there are, in our present legislative body, those who cannot be said to be inattentive to the cause of morality ; and when, doubtful schemes of moral good are pursued beyond the Atlantic ocean, at the risk of great political, likely enough to be attended with no small amount of moral evil, we may hope that the morality of the great body of the people at home may come to be so far an object of consideration, as not totally to be thrown

out of sight even when a question of revenue is to be discussed.

There is one evil, however, stated by the Lords of the Committee of Council themselves, as to be apprehended from a scarcity of corn, which the tax upon beer has no very indirect tendency to promote: an evil of a mixt nature, political and moral, which they mention more than once by the name of popular commotion. In civilized times and under a regular government, smuggling, even what is now left of it, forms a singular school for insurgency; where men, practised in toil and danger, live in habitual opposition to the laws and government, and at the same time in habitual friendly connection with the great body of the people. When high taxes forbid the use of beer, the smuggler's trade is looked upon with more particular complacency; and the great body of the people become habituated to the dangerous idea, that to evade, or successfully to oppose the law, produces

public

public good, to inforce it, public evil; that the smuggler is a patriot, the magistrate a minister of oppression.

Among the hindrances to agriculture may well be reckoned the present *law of settlements*; which forbids the migration of industry to the parts where it is wanted, and compels the maintenance of involuntary sloth. I wish Sir William Young would again bring forward, with such improvements as he is very capable of making, his bill for emancipating the poor from their present attachment to the glebe, and relieving from a banishment for life, from their country and relations, those whose hopes or whose necessities have led them in early age to pass a year in a distant service. Whether as a political or a moral object, this might be worthy the attention of some of those who are so anxious to legislate for the whites of Jamaica or the blacks of Guinea.

Not.

Notwithstanding however all the existing discouragements and hindrances, I have no doubt but the Committee of Council are amply founded in their opinion 'that the agriculture of the country has not of late declined.' I am even persuaded that it has been improving and extending. The great increase of commerce, wealth, and population has forced an increase of agriculture in spite of discouragement; but it has been unable to force an increase of produce equal to the increased demand. I am of opinion even that the tillage has increased: at least the number of acres brought under the plow, by inclosures of waste and sheepwalk in the down-countries, has exceeded that, by inclosure of common-field, given to pasture in the vales: but then the latter are by much the richer acres; and wherever the soil and situation allow the choice of the two modes of husbandry, every external circumstance leads to a preference of pasture to arable farms.

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I have mentioned an increase of the size of farms as in some instances desirable for the improvement of agriculture, and of course for public benefit. Among the absurd fancies which at various times have obtained the sanction of popular favor, and the support of popular clamor, few have been more absurd than the prejudices against the inclosure of wastes, and the ingrossing of farms. Excepting occasionally a few interested persons, they have obtained mostly among the inhabitants of towns, among those most ignorant of husbandry, and equally ignorant of all the great interests of the country. I have met with men who really believed that converting a furzy or swampy common into corn-fields, injured the country by diminishing its produce ! The clamor against the ingrossing of farms, or against the too great size of farms, is not quite so preposterous : in some parts of the country a division of farms might be advantageous, equally to the land-owner and to the public ; but if those who make the clamor could make the

law,

law, instead of encouragement, the most injurious restrictions upon agriculture would be the result. It is curious enough to observe that the prejudice against ingrossing farms lies all against tillage-farms; which, from the nature of the business, cannot, with advantage to the occupier, exceed a certain, and that a moderate extent; whereas grazing scarcely knows any bounds but those which the deficiency of pasture to be rented, or of capital to stock it, may prescribe. What would those tradesmen, who want laws to limit the business of the farmer, say to a proposal for a law to limit their business? Trade they will say cannot prosper unless it is free. How then is Agriculture to thrive in shackles? What spirited cultivation can be reasonably expected, what man of capital and fair hopes will give his time to agriculture, if he is told that, whatever his industry, whatever his spirit of improvement, he shall never rise in his vocation; he shall be condemned for life to struggle with fortune upon a narrow scale:

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if he increases his capital, he shall not employ the surplus in improving land ; he shall have only one resource, which the new corn-bill seems to open, not totally alien from the business to which he was bred ; he may turn corn-merchant, and employ, to any amount, in the trade of foreign corn, that capital which he shall not be permitted to employ in augmenting the growth within his own country. As it is, the business of agriculture is not over-inviting to those whom wealth allures. We see, every day, as Adam Smith has well observed, 'the most splendid fortunes, ' acquired in the course of a single life by 'trade and manufactures, frequently from a 'very small capital, sometimes from no capi- 'tal. A single instance of such a fortune ac- 'quired by agriculture in the same time, and 'from such a capital, has not, perhaps oc- 'curred in Europe during the present cen- 'tury.\* So confined in its nature is the busi-

\* *Wealth of Nations*, b. 2. c. 5. p. 457. v. 1.

ness of agriculture; and yet there are those who would still farther confine it by legislative restrictions; ignorant, in their illiberality, that so they would doubly injure their own interest; by increasing the price of the necessities of life, and by forcing more adventurers and more capital to competition with them in trade.

The extent of business that can be advantageously managed by one man, is however, as I have observed, not limited by the nature of things for grazing as for tillage; and hence the well-known saying of old Cato, of which Adam Smith has taken notice, without however assigning this, perhaps a principal ground of it, that the most advantageous thing in husbandry was feeding well; the next, feeding moderately well; feeding ill, the third; and the most profitable tillage he reckoned below the most unprofitable feeding.\* The difference

\* *Wealth of Nations*, b. 1. c. 11. p. 187. v. 1. The advantage of feeding over tillage, was probably, from the circumstances

in profit between those two branches of husbandry was perhaps greater in antient Italy than now in England; but still with us feeding has great advantages, or rather is free from great inconveniencies incident to and inseparable from tillage. Hence tillage stands in the greater need of relief from those hindrances and discouragements which, not the nature of things, but unwise laws have imposed upon it.

Nor, possibly, may this be all that a just

circumstances of Italy in his age, still greater to old Cato than even to an English gentleman farmer. The reason why tillage cannot be advantageously extended beyond the employment of a comparatively small capital, is, that many hands must not only be employed but trusted, to a large amount, and in critical concerns, wide of each other, so that no diligence of the master can duly superintend the business. This would be the case in antient Italy as in modern England, with the additional disadvantage, that, as the whole labor was there to be performed by slaves, the resource of task-work was unknown, and the farmer or owner of the estate must, probably in most places, maintain the year round as many slaves as he would want in harvest.

policy would dictate. Considering the very great superiority, in national benefit, of tillage to feeding, some positive encouragement may be farther advisable. Adam Smith, with much ingenuity of argument, has endeavoured to show, that the *bounty* on the exportation of corn has not promoted agriculture, and has not a tendency to promote it. Upon this, however, as upon some other occasions, where a knowlege of agriculture was necessary, he seems to have taken his premises deficiently. In another place he has truly remarked that, in thinly peopled countries, corn is always dearer than meat; where population is abundant, meat will always be dearer than corn. Formerly, in England, the price of corn exceeded that of meat: at present the price of meat greatly exceeds that of corn. But corn is far the more advantageous produce for the country; the same quantity of land, beside maintaining so much more labor, affording a much greater quantity of food for man

man, in grain than in meat. To this must be added the consideration that, beside the advantage of corn over meat, tillage can inable the same land, producing corn in course, to produce also as much meat as the same land in pasture. But, in the natural course of things, with the increase of wealth and population, follows that increase of profit to the individual from pasture-land, which, coinciding with ease of management and means of extending business, decides the individual to a preference of that mode of husbandry which is far the least beneficial to the public. These things being duly weighed, I think it must appear that the bounty on the exportation of corn has a tendency (not within the contemplation of Adam Smith) of a very beneficial kind; and I have no doubt but the Committee of Council have judged wisely in resolving that it should be continued.

Possibly

Possibly it may have been fortunate that, in this instance, public benefit and the advantage of trade coincide: according to Adam Smith they are often at variance; but he observes that the bounty has a direct tendency to promote the trade of the corn-merchant. With what jealous attention the trading and monied interests watch their concerns, with what unwearyed perseverance they pursue their measures, daily experience shows. Let either tax or regulation be proposed, that may, in the smallest degree, interfere with their fair or unfair profits, meetings are immediately held; communication is carried to the remotest corners of the country; petitions are presented to parliament; counsels are sent to support the cause within the houses; clamor is excited without; resolutions, sometimes approaching sedition, fill the newspapers. Efficacy, or the appearance of efficacy, once attending such measures, the slightest pretence gives occasion to similar attempts. The shop-tax having been repealed because the shop-

shopkeepers did not like it, the tobacconists declare they will never rest under measures taken for preventing the smuggling of tobacco; the bank, indignant to be denied the use of money not theirs, can even persuade the people to take up the interest of the bank in opposition to the public interest: in the same spirit, a set of men who do not come under the particular description of either moneyed or trading or landed interest, but belong mostly to the two former, the dissenters, having a mind for official power, vote that it is the same thing as civil freedom, and that they will have it. Meanwhile the land-owners and farmers hold no meetings: they patiently trust their cause on all occasions to the country-gentlemen in parliament: and these, Lord Sheffield says, are negligent of a cause which is so much their own: Adam Smith says they misunderstand it, and are imposed upon by the superior acuteness and diligence of the men of trade: Mr. Burke fears that the landed interest of this country

country may be overwhelmed by the monied interest, it as has been in France.

An alarm given by Mr. Burke, on such a topic, will deserve, and will force consideration. For myself, however, notwithstanding my disposition to respect whatever comes, uninfluenced by some known prejudice, with the sanction of Mr. Burke's name, I have the satisfaction not to have any great apprehension on the subject. There is not, in this country, that opposition, that separation, between the landed and the monied interest, which existed in France. On the contrary, a kind of partial amalgamation is perpetually going forward, a transfusion of parts of each into the body of the other; and whatever bickering, or whatever struggle, may arise about some concern of the day, there is too much fellow-feeling between them, too much consciousness of a common interest in each other's prosperity, for either to desire the other's ruin. Besides, whatever may be the spirit of

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the collected body, and whatever, in other countries, the general character of individuals, our British merchants, and even tradesmen, individually, yield to none in liberality; and being excluded from no situation by law, as unfitted for none by character, they are without motive for laboring the downfall of another order of men, to raise themselves. And, if the ferreting activity, under guidance of the selfish cunning, which, according to Adam Smith, are inherent in trade, (in the collected body) should unable it to filch some advantages from the heedless generosity of its lazy rival, yet the connection (widely different from what existed in France) with that numerous body of the people which lies below the monied interest, gives the landed interest of this country a breadth of basis, a weight, a solidity, sufficient, I trust, to withstand greater violence than, in the present state of things, is at all likely to be attempted against it.

The Lords of the Committee of Council have stated, in their representation to the King, no ground for their opinion that Britain is unable to supply itself with bread, except that, for several years, the actual average produce has been deficient. An inquiry which Mr. Powis has proposed to institute in the House of Commons, since the former part of these Considerations was committed to the press, may probably bring forward valuable information on the subject. In the mean time none can doubt that the produce may be increased. Whether the increase of produce can be made to keep pace with the possible increase of population and luxury, scarcely any calculation can determine; yet it is surely a point not to be given up without an effort. I will however freely confess my own apprehension, that, tho' other measures may be beneficial, yet the commutation of tithe alone can produce great benefit; the commutation of tithe is wanting to give almost

most every other beneficial measure its just  
energy.

I will venture yet a few words in addition to what has been already said upon that subject. The effect of tithe is of an extraordinary kind. It operates to the injury of the individual on whom it is raised, exactly in proportion to the capital and industry which he bestows upon his land. If he refuses both his labor and his money to his fields, the tithe affects him little. It operates to the injury of the public, by checking agriculture, exactly in proportion as general wealth gives means for general improvement in agriculture, and as increasing population makes improvement in agriculture necessary. In poor countries, where there is no capital to be applied to improvement, in thinly peopled countries, where the culture of half the land can supply the consumption and fallows may supersede improvement, tithe is of little public importance. It operates to discourage tillage and

to dispose to a preference of pasturage, exactly in proportion, as the increasing wealth of the country giving pasturage the advantage for private emolument, incouragement to tillage is wanting to produce public plenty. In short, *exactly in proportion to the population, the wealth, and the means of every luxury in the country, is the force of the operation of Tithe to produce a deficiency of bread.* If I am at all founded in my opinion, the point cannot be too strongly put; and both clergymen and lay-impropriators must, and surely will, excuse me; for it is not their injury, but on the contrary their benefit, their complete enjoyment of their share in the public benefit, with the additional advantage of an easier, less invidious, less litigious receipt of the private income their just due, that I desire.

In proportion, of course, to the injury which the country suffers from the law of tithe, as it now stands, would be the advantage of a commutation, which would inable

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the farmer to employ his industry and capital to his own benefit instead of that of the clergyman or the impropriator, and give him to be the undisturbed master of his own harvest: for the interference of the tithe-gatherer with the management of the farmer's business, is no small private vexation, and, in consequence, no small public evil. The communication would operate at once as a bounty upon the improvement of arable land, upon the improvement of waste, and upon the conversion of pasture to tillage; and it would take off the bounty, now in effect existing, upon the conversion of tillage to pasture. Let it be considered what would be the power of a bounty equal to more than eleven per cent of the returns, upon any decaying branch of commerce and manufacture, whose object was an article of necessary consumption; and then let it be imagined what might be the effect of liberating all the lands of England and Wales, now liable to the payment of tithe in kind, from a tax of more than eleven per

per cent of the return of all capital employed in improvement.

After the commutation of tithe, the bounty upon the exportation of grain, and the permission for willing industry to migrate whithersoever there may be a call for it, seem to be the articles of most importance in the consideration of means to increase the home-growth of corn. The bounty has a direct tendency to give a turn in favor of tillage, against that superiority of emolument which increasing wealth and luxury tend to bestow upon pasture: and it has this great recommendation, that the advantage thus given to tillage, injures not in the least any interest of theirs, whose lands, either from necessity of circumstances or the owner's choice, remain in pasture. The liberation of labor from the shackles in which the laws now hold it, beside increasing the means for making improvements in general, must have a particular tendency to relieve the wants of tillage,

tillage, and to inable and incourage cultivators to make new exertions in those modes and those branches requiring most labor ; which are, in general, those by which the greatest produce is obtained, of the most valuable kinds, and by which of course the public interest is most promoted.

Whatever may in any way operate as an inducement to employ capital in tillage, whether by diverting it from little, unprofitable trade, or by giving tillage advantages over meer feeding, must tend to promote the home-growth of corn. With the latter view, moderate taxes on the exportation of horses and of cheese, and perhaps of butter, whether they would produce any considerable benefit I will not undertake to say, but they would be of a beneficial tendency. With regard to the diversion of capital from useless adventure in trade, and inviting it to agriculture, farther than smoothing the way to tillage, by the removal of those obstructions and discouragements

ments which have been already noticed, it is a matter for the consideration rather of the financier than of the country-gentleman.

What precisely ought to be done with the distillery, and what with malt and beer, are also matters too deeply connected with the business of finance for me to presume to say. I am informed, on pretty good authority, that great exertions which have been made to check frauds in the collection of the revenue from the distillery, have had but a partial, and in some instances, a temporary and almost momentary effect. The persevering ingenuity particularly of the Bristol distillers, has baffled every new endeavour to counter-work it; and frauds to a very great amount are, and, in spite of all exertions, are likely to be, constantly practised. I am also informed, on authority of which I have no doubt, that British corn, which ought to make bread or beer, is distilled into spirits for the smugglers, or pretended smugglers; who,

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after disguising it by, perhaps, no very difficult process, sell it for French brandy. Those who are duped by this imposition, individually deserve what they meet with; but the public suffers by the ingenious knavery, which invites purchasers for a lawful commodity, by the alluring semblance of illicit trade. The revenue upon malt and beer can be collected; that upon spirits, I believe those best acquainted with it will say, cannot. Beer is the best solace and support of hard labor: in the hot season it is almost indispensable. All the southern and midland counties well know how efficacious it is in forwarding the important toil of harvest; when the appetite of the sturdiest kind faints with excessive heat and protracted exertion, and a nutritious drink only can recruit exhausted nature. The harvest-day's work in the north, where the laborers drink skim-milk and water, bears no proportion to that in the south. Spirits will hardly be recommended for the purpose of supporting

porting a month's incessant labor anywhere. The conclusion which the country-gentleman may presume to draw from these observations is, that whatever taxes or revenue-regulations tend to forbid the use of beer, and to promote the use of spirits, are injurious at the same time to the revenue and to agriculture.

While we are not merely threatened with, but suffering under, a deficient produce of corn, I do not conceive that the new encouragement, at this time offered to the consideration of Parliament, for promoting the growth of *Hemp*, can be advisable. Scarcely any object of tillage interferes so much with the growth of corn as hemp: it requires the richest tillage-land, and is a great impoverisher. To have hemp of our own growth is indeed unquestionably in itself desirable; but not to have hemp and want bread.

It appears to me, on the contrary, that hemp is rather the object for such a project as the

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Committee of Council has formed for the trade in corn. Could this country be made the magazine for supplying Europe with hemp, the public benefit might be great, and the public risk would be none.

The detail of the corn-trade, which has been more particularly the object, both of the inquiries of the Lords of the Committee of Council, and of Lord Sheffield's remarks, has lain too little within my line of observation for me to undertake to say much, or almost anything upon it. It seems indeed not likely to want discussion from those within whose province it rather lies. Since the beginning of these Considerations was committed to the press, a printed Representation has been sent from Liverpool to the Members of the House of Commons, stating the injury likely to ensue to the agriculture of this country from the peculiar indulgence for the importation of grain, proposed, by an amendment introduced into the depending corn-bill, to be granted to

Ireland. Taking the facts stated in that Representation to be true, the reasoning upon them seems cogent, and the matter appears altogether to deserve very serious attention.

Nor does it appear reasonably to be apprehended that this momentous business of the corn-trade will be decided upon hastily or lightly. The Lords of Council, in their representation to the King, have wisely laid down a maxim of caution, which has been already noticed in the course of these Considerations, and which certainly cannot be too much enforced: ‘A mistaken speculation in the *Trade of Corn*, they observe, ‘may produce the greatest public evils.’ They have also stated a maxim for a ground of proceedings which ought to be looked to as a polar star in all speculation on the subject, and which shall conclude, as it has preceded, my observations upon it: ‘The Production of Corn is the first and most important

portant occupation of the subjects of every country ; and on its success rests the main support and prosperity of every other trade.'

What I conceive to be the mistakes of others, mistakes on a subject of very great importance to the country's welfare, have urged me to offer these hasty remarks to the public. If I, tho but by my mistakes, can incite those who have more knowlege or better judgement, to inform the public better, my labor will not be lost ; but, still more, if any information which I can either give or elicit, may inable or incite those who have power, to employ it to public benefit, I shall be largely rewarded.

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State of the LAWS for regulating the**

**IMPORTATION AND EXPORTATION OF**

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And submitting to His MAJESTY's CONSIDERA-  
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OCTAVO EDITION OF  
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